

March 25, 1996

LB 1059  
LR 208

those concerns and address those concerns, and they do it in the following fashion. First off, we talk about the current counties and regions and the roles that they play and indicate that we do not deny counties the voluntary and optional ability to be involved in the delivery of health and human services or to contribute to the cost of those or to help fund those or help organize those services. So that is one thing that we clarify, that we eliminate the mandate, in a sense, unfunded mandate to the counties, to be a participant, but we allow on a voluntary basis their participation. I also want to indicate in here, this is for Senator Jensen's benefit. We clarified that both public and private providers will be involved in delivery of services. So I know you'd like that, Senator Jensen. (Laughs) We also have in here, we also talk about the funding date and the takeover, which is currently scheduled for 1998. And what we do is we set the funding level of June 30 of this year so that we have a base date for establishing the funding when the takeover occurs under the bill two years from now. The idea would be that we wouldn't have the counties at a later date add on to the funding, thus adding on to the burden the state has to, has to carry. We set the date so that that...we cannot be taken advantage of. That's the intent of that section of the amendments. In addition, we clarify in here that there will be...the intent of the Legislature is to have administrative savings and efficiencies through this bill, but we also indicate that we want to see a maintenance of effort in the programs and services. The concern at the hearing is we will hopefully generate savings, but will we end up reducing services. And the intent isn't to end up reducing services, but rather to reduce the inefficiencies and the cost and that is what we clarify with the committee amendment. In addition, we talk about the involvement of regional community representatives in the process. The bill is delayed for two years, and so we want them to be involved in the development of the...and the implementation of the bill. Now let me just take a couple of minutes, after describing the committee amendments, to talk further about what the bill does. This is the product not of just the interim study as I mentioned, LR 208, which you have copies distributed previously, but it actually is an ongoing discussion that's occurred as long as I've been in the Legislature. When I first came in the Legislature in '79, we had an issue of the closing of the Norfolk Regional Center, Senator Klein, up in Norfolk. We at that time then studied the whole mental health system and determined that there were